

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 18228

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR, US
SUBJ: MITTERRAND VISIT TO US

1. AT RESTAURANT LUNCH JUNE 21 HOSTED BY SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS, PONTILLON AND ROCARD, FOR TARNOFF AND LAKE (ALSO ATTENDED BY ZIMMERMAN, EUR(PP), TARNOFF, PER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SECRETARY, INFORMED FS LEADERS OFFICIALLY, THAT MITTERRAND WOULD BE WELCOMED IN WASHINGTON IN JULY AND THAT VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY WOULD BE GLAD TO RECEIVE HIM. TARNOFF EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT WAS RECEIVING THREE OR FOUR FOREIGN CHIEFS OF STATE IN JULY AND THAT HIS SCHEDULE WOULD NOT ALLOW FOR MEETING WITH MITTERRAND.

2. NEITHER PONTILLON NOR ROCARD SEEMED SURPRISED AT MESSAGE; PONTILLON SAID HE HAD GOTTEN FORETASTE OF IT DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE US. HE ASKED IF SEPTEMBER VISIT WOULD RELIEVE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULING PROBLEMS. TARNOFF, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, SAID PRESIDENT HAD HEAVY SCHEDULE IN SEPTEMBER WITH UNGA OPENING AND THAT ANY LATER DATE WOULD INJECT VISIT INTO FRENCH ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN; HE THEREFORE DOUBTED THAT US DECISION COULD BE CHANGED. ROCARD INTERJECTED THAT THE CAMPAIGN HAD ALREADY BEGUN AND SAID THAT PS HAD

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ERRED IN ASKING FOR A VISIT SO LATE.

3. TWO FRENCHMEN SPECULATED OUT LOUD ON VARIOUS SCENARIOS FOR MITTERRAND: NO VISIT AT ALL, VISIT TO WASHINGTON WITHOUT SEEING ANYBODY IN US GOVERNMENT, VISIT TO US WITHOUT GOING TO WASHINGTON, OR ACCEPTANCE OF MEETING WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY.

TARNOFF SAID DECISION WAS OBVIOUSLY MITTERRAND'S BUT THAT VISIT TO WASHINGTON WITHOUT SEEING ANY US OFFICIALS COULD WELL APPEAR TO BE CALCULATED AS A MITTERRAND SNUB OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THAT VISIT TO US WITHOUT STOPPING IN WASHINGTON MIGHT RAISE PRESS SPECULATION AND QUESTIONS ABOUT WHY MITTERRAND WAS NOT VISITING THE CAPITAL. PONTILLON, WITH ROCARD'S APPARENT APPROVAL, SAID THAT HIS RECOMMENDATION TO MITTERRAND WOULD BE THAT MITTERRAND ACCEPT MEETING WITH MONDALE AND VANCE. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR TO MITTERRAND THAT VICE PRESIDENT PLAYS MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE ROLE IN CARTER ADMINISTRATION. LUNCH ENDED ON FRIENDLY NOTE, WITH PONTILLON SAYING HE COULD NOT PREDICT MITTERRAND'S ANSWER BUT WOULD PUT THE QUESTION TO HIM AND GET BACK TO US.

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